

(1870)

6

PROCEEDINGS

Attending the Ceremonies
OF

Laying the Corner Stone



of the new

Building for

Mc Simai Hospital.

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

MAY 25TH 1870.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.

BENJAMIN NATHAN, PRESIDENT.
EMANUEL B. HART, VICE-PRESIDENT.
LEWIS MAY, TREASURER.
SAMUEL A. LEWIS, HON. SECRETARY.
JULIUS J. LYONS, SECRETARY.

DIRECTORS :

JOHN M. LAWRENCE,	SOLOMON SOMMERICH,
HARRIS ARONSON,	JULES S. ABECASIS,
HENRY GITTERMAN,	ALBERT S. ROSENBAUM,
LEWIS FATMAN,	MAX STADLER.

Mount Sinai Hospital.

ORDER OF CEREMONY,

ON THE OCCASION OF

LAYING THE CORNER STONE

OF THE

NEW BUILDING, LEXINGTON AVE. AND 66th ST.,

On Wednesday, May 25, 1870, at 3 o'clock.

1.

MUSIC.

2.

PRAYER, - - - by the Rev'd J. J. LYONS.

3.

MUSIC.

4.

President and Vice-President deposit in the Tin Box
Various Documents and Coins.

5.

PRESENTATION OF THE TROWEL,
by the President to his Honor the Mayor.

6.

THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE.

7.

MUSIC.

8.

ADDRESS, - by the Hon. ALBERT CARDOZO, LL.D.

9.

MUSIC.

MUSIC BY EBEN'S BAND.

PROCEEDINGS.

THE formal proceedings were commenced with a prayer pronounced in Hebrew by the Rev. J. J. Lyons. The English translation is as follows :—

Our God, and God of our fathers, by whose command all things were called into existence : behold thy people approaching thy presence this day, amidst prayer and praise to make choice of a spot of ground, which they desire to devote as holy unto thee, there to lay the cornerstone of a new tabernacle for the protection of the sick and the afflicted. But what are we without thy aid, and what is our power without thy blessing ? Thine, O Lord, are the greatness and the power, and it is in thine hand alone to make great and to give strength unto all things. The seed the farmer sows would yield but thorn and thistle if thou didst not bless it. In vain do the builders labor, except thou build the house, and useless is the watchman's care, unless thou O Lord protect the city. Who would place his trust in the foundation of brick and stone, of plaster and mortar, when, by thy mere breath, walls of iron, strengthened with bolts and bars, are overthrown ? When thou decreest destruction, none can heal the breach ; but when thy word, O Lord, goeth forth in blessing, the frail house of clay is seen to stand firmly, like a rock. Thou speakest and thy will is done ; thou commandest, and it is established. We therefore turn to

thee this day with our supplication to prosper the works of our hands and the designs of our hearts, that all of us in this assembly may realize the completion of this house in joy and happiness, there to imitate, as much as we can, thy attribute of love, O Lord, merciful and gracious, whose every way is mercy and truth.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, from henceforth and forevermore, that thou didst at first awaken the spirit of compassion in our hearts, and enable us to deal kindly with our fellow-mortals in distress, and to afford them comfort and relief in their affliction. By thy favor we were permitted to associate together, and to erect an asylum where many a sufferer has found help and support, health and strength. Now, O Lord, thou knowest it is not to make ourselves a name; it is not in pride or arrogance that we have undertaken the building of a new Hospital, but to endeavor to enlarge our usefulness and to respond to the cries of those who in pain and anguish ask: "Whence shall our help come?" "Is there no more balm in Gilead?" "Who shall bind up our wounds?" It is more largely to compassionate with the distressed that your children have taken counsel together and resolved to raise this new sanctuary in honor of thee, O Lord, who hast thus far answered their prayer, and hast been with them in the way which they have gone. "This is the happy day we have hoped for; we have found, we have seen it." "This is the day that thou hast appointed on which we will rejoice," and gratefully proclaim praise and glory to thy name.

Regard with favor and with mercy, we beseech thee, the President, Directors, and Members of this society, and all who are engaged in this holy work, and send them thy help and thy blessing from thy sanctuary.

Ordain, we pray thee, peace and happiness for our

Chief Magistrate his Honor the Mayor, who has kindly favored us by accepting the invitation to lay this cornerstone and by his participation in the solemnities of the occasion ; and also for all who have assisted, by their influence and liberality, by their piety and benevolence, to promote the welfare of our institution.

Requite, we pray thee, the gratuitous services of the medical men of great fame in this city, and regard favorably the willingness and promptness with which they strive to mitigate the sufferings of the afflicted. They are thy messengers sent on earth to do thy good work. The physician's task is arduous and difficult ; may their reward be great and glorious.

Bless and preserve the distinguished orator of the day. Prosper his ways, and the ways of every one in this assembly, and fulfil, we pray thee, to them what is promised in thy Holy Book : "Happy shall he be who careth for the poor ; on the day of evil the Lord will deliver him ; he shall be made happy on the earth. The Lord will sustain him on the bed of languishing. Thou, O Lord, wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Amen.

We acknowledge, O God, our unworthiness of all the mercies and all the truth which thou hast shown unto us, as we recall in sorrow the time when nations, walking in the stubbornness of their hearts, put every obstacle in the way of Israel, that he might not come into their council, and be not included in their assembly. But now, thanks to thee, O God, enlargement and deliverance have arisen for the Hebrews in many lands, more especially in this blessed portion of America, famous for its liberality and justice towards all the nations of the earth ; and well may the people ask, "What nation is there so great as this with statutes and judgments," enlightening the whole earth and those who

dwell therein with righteousness and justice, with love and mercy. Look down, then, we pray thee, from the habitation of thy holiness, from the heavens, and bless and protect the constituted authorities of these United States, of the State of New York, and of this City ; and let thine eyes be continually open to guard and to prosper the inhabitants of this country, where every one of us "may sit in safety under his vine and fig-tree, and there is none to make him afraid."

And now, O Lord, we pray thee, vouchsafe that this stone, which we will set up as a pillar this day, may be regarded as another evidence of the progress of peace and good-will among men ; and may the house that we will build thereon prove a shelter to suffering humanity, without distinction of faith ; and may we be enabled to afford cheer and comfort to every one that may knock at its door, be he or be he not of the seed of Israel. For we are all brothers, and in the language of our prophet, "Have we not all *one* father, and hath not one God created us all?"

Upon Mount Sinai of old, O Lord, didst thou cause thy glory to shine forth. It was there thou didst proclaim the law of universal compassion and mercy ; there thou didst first command, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Be gracious unto us now, and incline our hearts fully to obey this holy precept, so that this house, which will be designated Mount Sinai Hospital, like Mount Sinai of old, may "smoke in every part" with the sacrifices of love and charity—sacrifices which we pray may secure unto us thy blessings of peace and happiness, here and hereafter.

"May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, prove acceptable before thee, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." Amen, Amen.

Messrs. BENJAMIN NATHAN and EMANUEL B. HART, respectively the President and the Vice-President of the Board of Directors, next deposited in a metal box designed to be inserted in the corner-stone all documents and reports which related to the Hospital since its foundation, and embracing a complete history of it ; also copies of the Hebrew papers published in New York, and various copies of daily and weekly papers of the most recent date ; with appropriate specimens of the currency of the country, and documents of a current public interest.

After which President NATHAN, addressing himself to the Mayor of the city, said :—

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT NATHAN.

MR. MAYOR—As president of the Mount Sinai Hospital, the pleasing duty devolves upon me to inaugurate the ceremonies of this occasion by presenting to you this trowel, and to ask you to lay the corner-stone of our new edifice. Another more capable than I will with fitting words speak of the great work which our hospital has accomplished in relieving the suffering and aiding their restoration to health and usefulness. Its charity has not been limited to any creed, race, or nationality ; and let us now, at this auspicious moment, indulge the hope that the good which, under the blessing of God, has been done, may be small in comparison with that which shall follow the erection of this new building, affording enlarged facilities, and thereby extending its sphere of action. And now, Mr. Mayor, before you lay the corner-stone in the place assigned for its reception, let us hope that nothing will occur to retard the progress and completion of the hospital, which will not only be an ornament to

the city but a monument of the liberality of the community. Invoking the blessing of Almighty God on all who are assembled here this day to witness the ceremonies, and with prayers that their lives may be spared to join in the dedication of the building to its purposes, I tender to you, sir, in behalf of the directors and members of the Mount Sinai Hospital, their thanks, and the assurance of their high appreciation of the honor which you have done them on this occasion.

Mayor HALL received the trowel.

The trowel presented was of silver, and had upon one side of it a Hebrew inscription signifying *House of the Sick*. On the other side an inscription of gift, with the names of officers and directors.

ADDRESS OF MAYOR HALL.

Mayor OAKLEY HALL responded as follows :—

MR. PRESIDENT NATHAN, and members of the Board of Directors of the Mount Sinai Hospital:—I congratulate you upon this new and important advance in that great work of benevolence which you have all so zealously, so disinterestedly, and so faithfully had in charge during some years past. But, more than all, I congratulate the City of New York. It is exceedingly appropriate that the Mayor of the city—not the individual, but the officer—should be here to-day to participate in these interesting ceremonies, and that one of the most honored judges of its highest court should come to-day to lend his characteristic sympathy and his magnetic eloquence.

Other cities boast of peculiar and familiar titles descriptive of their inhabitants. There is the "City of Brotherly Love," as Philadelphia is called; and there is Brooklyn, the "City of Churches;" but the City of

New York proudly and gloriously boasts of being the great "City of Charity." (Great applause.) It is therefore doubly appropriate that the Mayor of that city should be here, the high priest, as it were, of these ceremonies. (Renewed applause.)

The Mayor then descended from the platform, and having placed himself near the stone, continued as follows :—

I now proceed to lay this corner-stone in the name of our common humanity ; in the name of the common mortal life to which we all cling ; in the name of those ills of the body and the mind to which we are all subject ; in the name of universal mercy, which we all prayerfully demand ; and in the name of that universal death which we all reverently expect. And Jehovah grant, that so long as time endure, Angels of Compassion, with healing on their wings, may hover round the site of this Mount Sinai Hospital.

The Mayor then spread the mortar with the silver trowel ; the stone was lowered in its place ; three strokes were struck with the gavel, and the Mayor completed the ceremony by adding :—

Lie thou there, O corner-stone ; and in the translated sentence of the noble prayer which has been offered here to-day, mayest thou ever rest beneath the site of an hospital that shall be the shelter of suffering humanity without distinction of faith.

The Hon. ALBERT CARDOZO, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, then pronounced the following address :—

ADDRESS OF JUDGE CARDOZO.

Pressed with duties which scarcely allow time for needed rest, and utterly deny opportunity for adequate

preparation, I have nevertheless, in deference to the wishes of friends, but contrary to my own preference and inclination, accepted the invitation to speak here to-day. Not with the expectation that I shall utter anything worthy of the occasion; for, were I capable, my voice is stilled in contemplation of the event and the rites in which we are engaged; so that little more shall I attempt to do than to present, with cold detail, a brief sketch of an institution which, fortunately for it, is its own best advocate.

About twenty years ago, there assembled in the City of New York a few pious gentlemen of an ancient faith, founded in the days of old father Abraham, and preserved in its integrity through many vicissitudes and much suffering down to the present time. And if, which I have been accustomed to believe not so, any importance attaches to the subject of ancestry, they were lineal descendants of those great men whose genius illumined the earth, and whose prowess, wisdom, and learning made the only Democratic theocracy which the world has yet seen, renowned and conspicuous for everything that can make a nation great and glorious in peace and in war, in art and in science. They were Hebrews! Not of that vulgar and degraded class to be found among all faiths, and unhappily most noisy and presumptuous, whose debased instincts bring disgrace and contumely on the religion they profess—but men of pure and elevated character, who practised the virtues that religion should produce. And, actuated by a desire—always a sentiment with the race—to protect the public charities of the land in which they dwell, while cheerfully contributing to uphold them, from the burden of supporting the unfortunate of their faith, by providing for all the necessitous of their creed, they found that there was lacking one

important institution which was indispensable to make their charitable system complete. There were means to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to bury the dead, to extend material comfort to impoverished widowhood, and to support and educate the orphan, and assist him to become, if an humble, at least a worthy and reputable citizen. But there was yet another class, whose claims upon the humane could not be disregarded. It consisted of those who needed that description of medical or surgical aid or care which could only be successfully afforded to them in a well-organized and properly conducted hospital. That necessity they resolved must be supplied; and those philanthropic gentlemen set themselves about its accomplishment with a determined will, and a zeal and ardor worthy of the cause in which they were engaged. Still, lavish as the Hebrews proverbially are in such matters, the demands upon them were already so great, that some time elapsed before any considerable progress was made. But constant and energetic efforts to effect a purpose for which the best impulses of our nature appeal, whose merits do not need and defy description, must prevail; and in the month of January, 1852, success had become so probable that articles of association under the statutes of the State were duly executed and filed; and very soon afterwards, by subscriptions from individuals and donations from other charitable societies, and the proceeds of a ball given in aid of the enterprise, such a sum had been accumulated that the subject of hiring a house for temporary use was agitated, discussed and considered, but abandoned because of the difficulty of securing a place suitable for the purpose. Not long after this, the hospital, by the will of a gentleman whose charities, irrespective of creed, have made his name familiar throughout the world, and

his memory dear to all mankind, received a large addition to its funds; and land in Twenty-eighth street, between Seventh and Eighth avenues, having been given to it by another generous benefactor, it was resolved to erect a suitable hospital building; and on the 25th of November, 1853, though it is recorded that the weather was severe, the corner-stone of the building yet occupied was laid, with fitting ceremonies, in the presence of a large concourse of prominent citizens, who had assembled to exhibit their interest in the undertaking, and to testify their sympathy with the object, and their approbation of the energy with which it had been pursued. And, finally, a structure which the newspapers described as "calculated to accommodate one hundred and fifty persons, admirably arranged and well ventilated, and costing about \$35,000," was completed, and on the 17th of May, 1855, amid exultant rejoicing, and with profound gratitude, was solemnly consecrated to the holy purposes of its founders, and that which before had been but a cherished hope became a consummated reality. During that year—1855—the first of its practical existence, one hundred and thirteen patients were recipients of its bounty; and it has gone on increasing and extending its usefulness until, in 1869, the number of persons treated exceeded fifteen hundred.

But I must hasten with my narrative; for I fear to become tedious or to detain you too long. Indeed, by its annual reports, the history of the institution, from its organization, is familiar to most of you. To those to whom it is not, it is enough to say that down to 1865, it was supported exclusively by voluntary contributions from the charitable, and that, should I attempt to relate its experience during that interval, I should only repeat what

you all well understand and realize, the trials and difficulties to which all new institutions are subjected during the period of their infancy, and until they have vindicated their claims to public confidence. Suffice it to say, that it steadily grew in public estimation and favor, and soon became recognized as a model hospital, whether considered with reference to the convenience and arrangements of the buildings, the superiority of the medical staff, or the liberality of the management. Thus far it had been used mostly, if not exclusively, for Hebrews. I believe in a few instances of urgent necessity, like serious accident in the vicinity, persons of other faiths had been treated. But they were exceptional cases.

But when could the charities of the Hebrews be long confined within the limits of the professors of their own faith? No such narrow estimate of its capacity or their duty ever entered the brain or the heart of the projectors of this noble work. It was a Hebrew institution, originating in Hebrew philanthropy and liberality, and forever to be maintained and governed by Hebrews; but its charities were to be of universal application. Anxiously, therefore, did it look forward to the time when the condition of its resources would enable it to make good the pledge which was made for it by a distinguished minister, one of the two surviving clergymen who assisted to frame and initiate this measure: both of them friends whom I am happy to see here to-day, rejoicing in the fulfilment of the good for which they strove so ardently, and who, I trust, will be spared for much more usefulness. On the occasion of laying the corner-stone of the Twenty-eighth street building, when he performed the part which has been allotted to me to-day, and which he would so much better discharge, acting as the organ of the direction, he told the assembled multitude, and the newspapers spread the re-

port throughout an approving and applauding world : " It is not the intention to exclude those not of the Hebrew faith, but Hebrew and Gentile alike are to share and participate in its advantages."

It was a proud triumph for the management, that it was able to begin to redeem this promise just when the necessity for it arose, during that trying period when the nation was tottering in its existence. Since then no discrimination has been allowed. All are received " save those whom their vice debases ;" and each is left to the dictates of his own conscience in the selection of a spiritual adviser, if any be desired, either for solace during illness, or to shrive the dying or bless the dead.

In 1865 the State first recognized the institution as entitled to its protection and patronage, and since then it has been annually placed in its just order in appropriations for charitable purposes.

At length the locality, which originally was admirably adapted to its uses, yielding to the changes which occur in all large cities, and especially in our own, succumbed to the demands of trade and the necessities of an increasing population ; and the din and bustle of the manufactories which grew up around it, and the contiguity of crowded tenements, admonished the directors that the pure atmosphere and the calm quiet, so essential for the invalid, could no longer be enjoyed in their present habitation. Besides, the building, which was well arranged so far as skill and experience had then suggested, had become inadequate to meet the demands of the present day, either as to numbers or improved system. These considerations being addressed to the Legislature, a law was passed in 1868, authorizing the city, in its discretion, to lease the property on which we are now standing. I need hardly say that the city authorities gladly exercised

the power thus conferred ; and with characteristic liberality granted a lease of this site to the hospital, at the nominal rent of one dollar, for the period of a hundred years. And it is hoped that soon, upon this spot, will be erected a building to which members of all persuasions have contributed, which it is estimated will cost \$250,000, and which will be an ornament to the city, and will rival in every particular any similar institution throughout the habitable globe.

During all this, Mr. President, I have omitted to say anything in praise of those whose skilful management has been crowned with such signal success, or of those who have so generously sustained and supported it, or of the distinguished medical faculty in which from the first it has been so favored, whose services have been gratuitously rendered.

I know they all reaped their reward in what they were doing, and I fear to speak of the living who are identified with the institution, for if I should utter what my heart would prompt it might seem fulsome, especially in this presence, where there are so many who have made their private interests subordinate to this great public charity. And besides, where all have been so kind according to their means, it would be invidious and unjust to particularize those whose fortunes have enabled them to give more largely, but not more willingly, than the mass. But at least I may be permitted to drop a word, though it be but to name them to the memory of some who were prominent, and at whose death the hearts of the Hebrews throbbed heavily ; for they knew, as each passed away, that the poor had one friend less on earth. For my part, I ask no higher epitaph. Touro, whose benevolence knew neither clime nor creed ; Simpson, the first President of the institution, venerable and venerated ; Lewis Morrison

the younger, Henry Hart and Fatman, earnest and active wherever the cause of charity most needed a worker ; Henry Hendricks, unobtrusive but efficient ; Dr. Mott, the framer of the rules for the government of the medical board, whose connection with it began with its commencement, and ended only at his death—chief of the medical staff—chief of the medical profession : some by land, some by money, some by laborious effort—benefactors of the hospital !—have all, within the brief period of its existence, passed to another world : some in the fulness of ripe old age, others stricken down in the maturity of their strength, and while life seemed fair and promising. They have gone from this sphere of toil and trial, where the reality never equals the anticipations of hope or ambition ; but their worth and their zeal, reverently treasured, will rear a loving monument to their memory, more enduring than brilliant fame, for polluted breath cannot tarnish nor time itself dim or efface it.

Their absence makes a void in the hearts of their associates, who keenly feel and deplore their loss, but they must find consolation in their bright example, and in the reflection that their deeds of mercy towards those who it is said are God's especial care, will have assuredly appealed before His throne for the salvation of the souls of their departed friends.

Let us let them rest gently. I have thus, hastily and imperfectly, alluded to the past. May not fondest hopes be indulged for the future ?

And now, from its foundation, I dedicate the beautiful edifice about to be erected on this spot to the charitable purposes for which it is designed. I dedicate it in the name of the union of these States—may both alike be perpetual ! whose theory of religious liberty and equality, faithfully maintained from the birth of the nation—may

it never be violated!—has attracted so many to these shores, who have shed lustre upon our race, and who have repaid their adopted country for its protection by devoting treasure and talent, and life itself, to her interests.

I dedicate it in the name of the State of New York—may the career of both be upward and onward in prosperity, forever! under whose parental and protecting care and benign influence and policy the institution has thriven and grown, from insignificant and dependent infancy, until it has attained its present extended usefulness and proportions.

I dedicate it in the name of the City of New York—catholic and profuse in its generosity towards all laudable objects—our pride, our home; with which our dearest interests and hopes are identified, and for whose welfare our heartstrings vibrate with tenderest emotion and sensibility; whose progress in all that makes a city really great, while only keeping pace with our affection, has excited the admiration and amazement of the world, and provoked at times the envy of her less favored sisters of both this and the old country; whose munificence towards this and all deserving charities marks her pre-eminent, as in everything else, for entire freedom from bigotry and for devotion to the cause of humanity and the sacred principle of religious liberty. And in the name of all these, speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves—for the helpless, the hapless, and the forlorn—I invoke the aid of all to sustain this admirable charity and make the institution a perfect and permanent success.

Of this address one of the newspapers of a succeeding day editorially remarked:—

The address will speak for itself. It is full, concise, and compact, as is all of the Judge's rhetoric. In a few

words the Judge has the capacity of saying a great deal. It is not easy to convey by description the magnetism of manner which attended its delivery. In attitude, in pose, in grace of gesture, in play of feature, in the sparkle of the eye, and in all which tends to illustrate by manner the efforts of oratory, the Judge surprised even his best friends. It is seldom that so finished an oratorical effort has been witnessed or heard in the City of New York.